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BAREFOOTING: WHY YOU SHOULD DO IT AND HOW TO GET STARTED

HEALTH

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From the beach to backyard parties to bobbing around the neighborhood, going barefoot is a special privilege of living in beach towns.

And as it turns out, we might be on to something.

While there are differences of opinion among experts, many podiatrists agree that being barefoot—at least in moderation—can reduce inflammation and make for healthier and fitter feet and legs. And many mental health professionals believe that there are benefits in a sense of peace and serenity that accompanies feeling the earth beneath our feet.

“Earthing,” or “grounding,” is a major trend on social media, in health-conscious circles and on college campuses. It’s based on the belief that we can experience physical, mental, emotional,

and spiritual benefits from being directly in contact with the earth around us.

Thankfully for us in Orange County, we have numerous locations as well as warm weather that makes going barefoot practical.

Here are some tips and things to know:

Start Slowly. You might think you couldn’t go barefoot on very many surfaces, but that’s likely because you aren’t used to bare feet. Start in the house, on the beach (on a cooler day when the sand isn’t as hot) and in clean grass.

Know the Dangers. Your mom might have warned you that being barefoot puts you at risk of catching a cold or flu in winter. But the more immediate danger is burning yourself in the summer. Dark surfaces are a lot warmer than light-colored ones. So especially on hot days, pack some flipflops for walking on asphalt. Also,

watch out for bees, especially amidst the super bloom this spring. I know from experience that stepping barefoot on a bee can be quite painful indeed.

Make Going Barefoot the Norm in Your House. Your carpets and floors will be cleaner. You’ll feel more relaxed. And you’ll even be more attentive to any problems with floors or stairs when you walk without shoes.

Let Kids Go Barefoot. During my childhood as a farm boy in the Midwest and Inland Empire, going barefoot was a fun and even educational experience. Plus, it improves balance and coordination and promotes the development of strong, flexible feet. And it’s easy since bare feet are socially acceptable for children in most situations.

Make 2024 the year to start healthy and safe barefooting—and thus enjoy our climate and landscape like never before!